



**SHOULDER  
ARTHROSCOPY**

**Eric M. Parsons,  
M.D.**

**Q:** I have been diagnosed with a rotator cuff tear and am contemplating surgery. What can I expect in terms of outcome if I have the surgery versus leaving the tear untreated?

**A:** There has been ample research examining the natural progression of a rotator cuff tear and how patients fare should they choose to neglect the tear and avoid surgery. While the shoulder pain and weakness that accompany a rotator cuff tear can be temporarily improved with nonsurgical methods such as physical therapy and judicious use of pain relieving injections, the best available medical evidence consistently shows superior outcomes in patients who elect to have rotator cuff repair surgery.

A study published by Jain et al. out of Vanderbilt University was published in the November 2019 issue of The American Journal of Sports Medicine. It compared two groups of patients diagnosed with a rotator cuff tear. One group received a standard nonoperative approach of physical therapy, the other group underwent rotator cuff repair surgery. The results of the study demonstrated that the surgical repair group had consistently superior results in terms of pain relief and shoulder function at 3, 6, 12, and 18 months following the initiation of treatment.

This research adds to the growing body of literature drawing the same conclusion. Namely, should you be diagnosed with a rotator cuff tear you are generally best served by having it fixed surgically. When factoring in that neglecting a rotator cuff tear for a period of time also can have deleterious effects on the outcome of later surgery, being proactive in these cases is advisable.

To learn more about rotator cuff repair surgery visit [ohioshouldercenter.com](http://ohioshouldercenter.com)

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**AUDIOLOGY**

**Dr. Jane  
Kukula, AuD**

**Q:** What is Better Hearing Month?

**A:** May is recognized as Better Hearing Month! Better Hearing Month helps highlight the importance of raising awareness about hearing health. This month serves as an opportunity to educate the public about the importance of regular hearing evaluation, and the available resources for those that experience hearing difficulties.

Regular hearing evaluation is essential for maintaining your overall health and well-being. Just like getting regular check-ups for other aspects of your health, monitoring your hearing health ensures that you can fully engage in the world around you. Hearing loss can occur gradually, often going unnoticed until it becomes significant. Having your hearing checked regularly serves as a proactive measure in detecting issues early on. Hearing checks can also uncover underlying health conditions beyond your ears, and hearing loss. Moreover, untreated hearing loss can have a significant negative impact on your quality of life. Hearing loss can lead to feelings of isolation, anxiety, depression, difficulty communicating, fatigue, and even increased chance of memory problems. By identifying hearing loss early, you can explore different interventions such as hearing aids or assistive devices to improve your communication abilities, stimulate your brain, and maintain daily life and your social connections. Just like many health conditions, early detection and intervention results in best outcomes.

Ultimately, having your hearing evaluated is a simple yet crucial step in preserving your auditory health and overall wellbeing. By prioritizing regular hearing checks, you can ensure early detection of any problem and get the right treatment/solutions to help you hear better, improve communication, stimulate the brain, enhance social interactions and more. Call 440-205-8848 to schedule an appointment. Life Sounds Great!

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**INSURANCE**

**Laura Mutsko  
Agent and CSA**

**Q:** How do I file an appeal if my Part D plan won't cover my prescription?

**A:** Each Medicare Part D (Prescription) plan has its own formulary, which is a list of drugs the plan covers. If you were denied coverage for a prescribed drug, you have the right to appeal this decision.

Your first step before you file a formal appeal is to contact your Part D plan provider to find out why you were denied coverage. The specific drug may not be on the plan's formulary, there may be quantity restrictions, or prior approval may be required. Sometimes, a plan will require you to try a less expensive drug first.

Once you determine why you were denied coverage, ask your plan how to file an exception request or a request for coverage determination. Once you file the request, you will be informed of your plan's decision within 72 hours. If your exception request is denied, it's time to begin the formal appeal process.

You will have 60 days from the date listed on the notice provided to you to file an appeal. You need to carefully follow the directions on the notice, providing complete details if requested. Your plan will issue their decision within seven days. If the plan approves the appeal, your drug will be covered. If coverage is denied, you can file an appeal with the Independent Review Entity (IRE).

If your request is denied by the IRE, you have additional higher levels of appeal including the Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals (OMHA) level, an appeal to the Medicare Appeals Council, and an appeal with the Federal District Court. You can request help filing appeals at any level from a State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), your physician, or the Medicare Rights Center.

It is important to keep records of all conversations you have with your plan, as well as any documents you receive pertaining to the appeals process. And be persistent. Appeals at higher levels are often approved without added information, even if they were denied at lower levels.

Do you need help choosing a Medicare Advantage plan or Supplement? Give me a call at 440-255-5700 or email me at [Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com](mailto:Lmutsko@mutskoinsurance.com). I look forward to helping you.

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*We do not offer every plan available in your area. Currently, we represent seven organizations which offer eighty-four products in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov, 1-800-MEDICARE, or your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) to get information on all of your options.*



**DENTAL  
CARE**

**Jeffrey Gross,  
DDS, FAGD**

**Q:** I Hate My Snaggle Tooth

**A:** I heard this comment from a patient this week who has a high-profile job. He told me he had an opportunity to have orthodontics as a teenager, but it never

happened. His case is not easy, as there is a discrepancy between his upper and lower jaws. In what we consider a normal setup; the jaws are similar in size. The upper teeth are positioned and sit over the lower teeth. This arrangement emphasizes your smile with your upper teeth.

The smaller size of the upper jaw, coupled with larger teeth, is a recipe for disaster in cosmetics. His upper teeth are very crowded and jammed into each other. His upper eye tooth is pushed out and up in his mouth. Even though he sports facial hair, and it hides a lot of his smile, when he hears something funny and laughs, his crowding shows in all of its glory.

My patients and readers know that looks are important to self-esteem and confidence. I do not want to diminish this concept. Additionally, I am concerned about the future health of your teeth. Crooked teeth are harder to keep clean. When we struggle with cleanliness, we see gum disease develop and cavities between the teeth. It is easy to understand that if a patient develops a cavity between crowded teeth due to the poor ability to maintain cleanliness, I experience their frustration. Just like they cannot get between their teeth to clean, I cannot get into that area to eliminate a tooth cavity or expect the gums to heal well. For me to fix a crowded tooth, I need to remove tooth structure from more than one tooth to give me access to eliminate the disease that I find.

If we can attain straight and unjumbled teeth, the health of the mouth and cosmetics dramatically improve. Orthodontics is the dental discipline that emphasizes tooth position and alignment. Proper tooth position aids in cleanliness and reduces plaque buildup. Creating a wider jaw profile can help the airway and even lead to less sleep disturbance through sleep apnea.

When we think of orthodontics, the first thought that comes to mind is braces. The wires and brackets allow a dentist to move your teeth predictably and create a healthier alignment. We think of braces on younger patients, but the truth is that they are acceptable at any age. What keeps patients away from them is the cosmetic factor that adults don't want to experience.

To address this issue and others, clear aligner therapy is now part of the modern tooth movement. It requires patient cooperation and compliance, but it works. This approach removes much, if not all, of the stigma associated with braces. Most of my adults prefer aligner therapy, with Invisalign being the most prominent and tested. With almost a quarter of a century of research and treatment, we know that it works.

Like most things in the body, there is seldom all or nothing. Marginal or partial improvement of crowding creates many benefits for you. If you dislike certain teeth, maybe it is time to address the issue and not be afraid of being too big of a job. Treatment should be customized and individualized to you and your situation. Please call me and let's look together at your concerns. Together, we can form a plan for you. I can be reached at 440.951.7856. I look forward to speaking with you.

*Jeffrey Gross, DDS, FAGD is an Ohio licensed general dentist and is on the staff of Case Western Reserve School of Dental Medicine.*

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